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ABSTRACT

"Wellness" is a widely used term to describe a participative process through which the individual becomes aware of and makes choices toward a more successful or healthy existence. Many colleges and universities have utilized wellness philosophies or models in a variety of areas. The wellness model serves as an outline for decision making in which the student asks a series of questions within each of the six dimensions--social, occupational, spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional--of Hettler's (1980) model. During a counseling or advising contact the outline is explained and discussed. The student is then given a copy of the inventory to carry along on job interviews, and finally, the student may choose to make a follow-up appointment with the counselor or advisor to discuss perceptions of the person-environment fit of each particular job opportunity. It is important for the professional and student to recognize that lifestyles are unique and personal. There is no single model for wellness which will identify the needs and values of all individuals. It is never too early to start making decisions which will be beneficial to one's physical and mental health. Career decisions can influence every other aspect of one's life, and are thus vitally important to the wellness concept. (LLL)

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A Wellness Approach to Career Counseling on the College Campus

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Abstract

This manuscript focuses on the utilization of the Wellness Model in a college counseling center for career counseling. The wellness model serves as an outline for decision making in which the student asks a series of questions within each of the six dimensions of Hettler's (1980) model. These dimensions include 1. Social, 2. Occupational, 3. Spiritual, 4. Physical, 5. Intellectual, and 6. Emotional. Students may use this inventory as a guideline in deciding which job offer may be the best choice as it relates to a person's total wellness. The inventory is presented in its entirety, and a complete description of its utilization is presented. The counselor's role in the process is described, and suggestions for the student's role are examined.

A Wellness Approach to Career Counseling on the College Campus

"Wellness " is a widely used term to describe a participative process through which the individual becomes aware of and makes choices toward a more successful or healthy existence (Hettler, 1980). Many colleges and universities have utilized wellness philosophies or models in a variety of areas. Some of these areas include health services (Hettler, 1980; Van Ness, 1981), the university counseling center (Elsenrath, 1984), residence halls (Krivoski & Warner, 1986; Pope, 1987), employee assistance and development programs (Ansley, 1983; Beeler, 1985, 1988; McMillan, 1986), mentoring transcript systems (Strickland, Ness, & Roberts, 1990), and, of course, with campus recreation programs (Leafgren & Elsenrath, 1986). According to Leafgren (1984), it is possible and desirable to set up a comprehensive campus wellness program which includes all student affairs units as well as other campus resources. An excellent example is the Wellness Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, which has been evolving since the early 1970s (Hettler, 1984). The program was initiated within the University Health Service, but has developed into a cooperative project.

Wellness and Career Counseling

An area which was discussed by Elsenrath (1984) within the context of the college counseling center was career development. Elsenrath stressed the importance of occupational choice in holistic functioning and noted that wise choices may positively affect stress levels, general health, and self esteem. Benjamin Litt (1984) introduced an approach termed "life-work planning" that is based on the notion that work goals are, and ought to be, equal and compatible with our personal and social goals. The shift in focus should be from "making a living" to "making a life". Litt suggested that individuals list and review present goals in six areas which roughly parallel Hettler's (1980) six dimensional wellness model.

In working with college seniors, and other students struggling with career decision making, the wellness approach to career selection and vocational counseling can positively influence decision making skills. Although it is

often important or necessary to accept a job which may not be "perfect", accepting a job totally on the basis of salary or as a "stepping stone" may be personally damaging. Unfortunately, many job selection choices are made with little consideration for the holistic package, including the geographical community, social supports, and health effects. First time job seekers may have a difficult time in developing a list of important questions. Students just entering the job market may benefit from this proactive, rather than reactive, approach to vocational behavior.

The focus of this article is to elaborate on the wellness model as it is utilized in the authors' career counseling contacts with college students. The wellness model serves as an outline for decison making in which the student asks a series of questions within each of the six dimensions. Hettler describes these dimensions as: 1. Social; 2. Occupational; 3. Spiritual; 4. Physical; 5. Intellectual; and 6. Emotional.

The Procedure

During a counseling or advising contact, the procedure in which the wellness approach tocareer counseling is utilized is quite simple. First, the outline is explained and discussed within the context of a counseling or advising appointment. The student is then given a copy of the inventory to carry along on job interviews, and finally, the student may choose to make a follow-up appointment with the counselor or adviser to discuss his or her perceptions of the person-environment fit of each particular job opportunity. This appointment is encouraged, in order to discuss the perceptions of each job with an objective third party.

The role of the counselor or adviser in utilizing this inventory is: 1. To explain the importance of the wellness concept in relation to career planning, 2. To empower the student by stressing the decision making process, 3. To provide an objective sounding board for questions and observations , and 4. To suggest ways in which the student can improve the person-environment fit in jobs which closely approximate an optimum choice.

There is no perfect job, as many a professional will attest. However, with an open mind and acute observation, a person can predict with reasonable accuracy the problems which may arise in each different situation.

The Inventory

The inventory questions can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no" response. In many situations, students can use these questions during an interview to find out whether or not these aspects of wellness will be provided in a certain job situation or location. In other situations, students can note whether or not these aspects of a job are negotiable, or may be in the future. Regardless of how the questions are used, the inventory provides a fairly complete assessment of each job prospect. In comparing different jobs, students can prioritize each dimension in relation to his or her personal priorities. Some aspects may be more important to an individual than other aspects. Students who are considered "non-traditional" may include family members or significant others in prioritizing the dimensions. Significant others could have their own copy of the inventory, or add questions which are important to them.

SOCIAL DIMENSION

This dimension measures the degree to which one contributes to the common welfare of one's community. This emphasizes the interdependence with others and with nature.

1. What is the composition of the local population and population density of the area? Is this satisfactory to me?
2. Are social clubs, civic organizations, and religious organizations available?
3. Can I be accepted for membership? What are their qualifications for membership?
4. What are the local attitudes toward persons of my age, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, and marital status?
5. Is there housing available for persons with my interest in affiliation or solitude?
6. Are self-help organizations available which meet my interests (such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Weight Watchers, Gamblers Anonymous etc.)?
7. Are there opportunities available for spouse/children/significant others' social interests (boy/girl scouts, Little League, Parents Without Partners) ?
8. Is it possible to pursue singular activities? Is it safe? (For example, Can I walk

or run by myself if I want to?)

9. Is public transportation available? Do I need public transportation to meet my social needs?
10. Is the cost of living prohibitive to spending money on social activities or opportunities?
11. Will I be required to attend social activities sponsored by my business or agency? Do I have a choice?
12. Can my significant other/spouse/children attend these activities?
13. What type of entertainment is popular in the area?
14. Are my entertainment interests available (i.e. movies, dining, night clubs, etc.)?
15. Do local legal statutes prohibit participation in entertainment areas that interest me such as horse or dog racing, gambling, purchase of alcoholic beverages?
16. Is there an outlet for my hobbies and interests? Are there others who share my interests?
17. Would I be close geographically to extended family and current friends?
18. Is there a place where I can go in this community to meet others my age, or can I meet prospective mates?
19. What are the values expected in relation to inter-office relationships?
20. What is expected in terms of supervisor/supervisee relationships?

OCCUPATIONAL DIMENSION

This dimension measures the satisfaction gained from one's work and the degree to which one is enriched by that work.

1. Do local libraries, or will my institution carry professional journals in my career area? Do they keep up-to-date information or can they acquire information through Inter-Library Loan?
2. What are the local opportunities available for professional development or training?

3. Are there available opportunities for promotion?
4. Are there opportunities for promotion or employment for my spouse or significant other?
5. Are occupationally related or required equipment and materials, and equipment maintenance available in this area?
6. Is there a travel budget for professional development opportunities, or do I have to pay for this myself?
7. Does the firm promote professional development and healthy competition?
8. Does the firm or business recognize and award achievement?
9. Will others in the community respect my profession?
10. Do I have weaknesses that can be strengthened with a geographically available college, or available workshops?
11. Do I need an advanced or professional degree to attain distinction in my field? Does this firm or business pay for any advanced training required?
12. Is there a mentoring program to assist with new staff development?
13. Will I have my own office or will I share with colleagues?
14. Is there a written job description or are my job duties nebulous?
15. What experiences and training will be available to me to improve my marketability in my next position?
16. Will the salary cover my expenses and other things I need to support me and/ or my family?
17. What are the additional benefits, if any?
18. Is this job something I want or could do for an extended period of time?
19. Will I experience prejudice or harassment on the job?
20. Will my supervisor(s) and I be compatible? How about my colleagues?
21. Will my personal values or ethics be compromised because of my job?
22. Will my political or religious affiliation be stifled because of this job?

SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

This dimension measures one's ongoing involvement in seeking meaning and purpose in human existence. It includes a deep appreciation for the depth and expanse of life and natural forces that exist in the universe.

1. Are there places (churches, synagogues, community centers etc.) for me to express my religious beliefs in this community?
2. Are there religious schools for my children if I choose to enroll them in such an institution? Is there such a private school in close proximity, and is it financially feasible for me to enroll them there?
3. Is there an open-minded attitude toward my religion or lifestyle in this community?
4. Is there pressure to conform to certain religious edicts in this community?
5. Is there a religious bookstore in close proximity?
6. Does the local library carry a variety of literature or publications that relate to spirituality or religious beliefs?
7. Are my religious holidays observed? Are my children's prospective schools flexible?
8. Is my employer flexible in relation to required attire and/or time off for religious observances?
9. Are my food preferences available in relation to my spiritual beliefs? Is it possible to express a vegetarian lifestyle preference in this community?
10. Will I feel restricted in expressing my beliefs to colleagues or others in the community?
11. Is there a recycling center in the area? Is this important to me?
12. Is there medical care in the area that corresponds with my religious preference?
13. Are there clothing stores in the area that carry attire traditional to my beliefs?

PHYSICAL DIMENSION

This dimension measures the degree to which one maintains cardiovascular flexibility and strength. It measures the behaviors that help one to prevent or detect early illnesses. It measure the degree to which one chooses foods

that are consistent with the dietary goals of the United States as reported by the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition.

1. Is the climate in this area suitable to my preferences and health related requirements?
2. Are there limits set by the environment that make it difficult for me to get adequate exercise?
3. Do I have a physical condition which limits the types of physical activity that I can participate in? Are there facilities for activities which I can participate in?
4. Are there environmental problems such as air and water pollution and toxic waste which negatively impacts local residents' long term health?
5. What is the rate of traffic injuries and fatalities? Does my job require a lot of travel in this and outlying areas?
6. What are the other health related problems inherent in my job (i.e. noise, heavy lifting, standing, carcinogens etc.) ?
7. Does this company or firm offer good health, life, disability, and dental insurance for me and my family?
8. Does the company or firm promote a wellness lifestyle?
9. Do they provide facilities or incentives to promote wellness and exercise?
10. Are there other health related or exercise facilities in the community that are not cost prohibitive?
11. Are there respected and recommended Doctors and Dentists in the community?
12. Is there a good hospital or medical clinic within a reasonable travel distance?
13. Are there specialists to assist me or my family with any special disease or condition that we may have? Is there emergency medical care immediately available?
14. Do the grocery stores stock healthful foods or bottled water?
15. Do I have special nutritional requirements that can be met with the businesses (grocery stores, restaurants) available in this community?
16. Are there services available designed especially to deal with problems such as

alcoholism, drug addiction, weight control, and/or mental health issues?

17. Can I buy the necessary clothing, equipment, and training necessary to pursue my sport/physical activity of choice?

INTELLECTUAL DIMENSION

This dimension measures the degree to which one engages his or her mind in creative, stimulating mental activities. An intellectually well person uses the resources available to expand his or her knowledge in improved skills, along with expanding potential for sharing with others.

1. What is the media availability in the area? Does it include newpapers, magazines, radio, television, and/or cable television? How expensive are these resources?
2. Are there facilities available which promote intellectual development? Do they include libraries, cultural centers, art galleries, museums, bookstores, or institutions of Higher Education?
3. Are there cultural organizations available which organize individuals? (These may include study groups, historical societies, literary guilds etc.)
4. Is there equipment accessibility to promote intellectual development? Do the libraries have copiers? Are there Fax machines and computer software stores? Is equipment maintenance prohibitive?
5. Is there job support for intellectual development?
6. Are intellectual pursuits valued in this community?
7. Are there opportunities outside of work which promote appreciation for the complexities of the universe?
8. Is freedom of speech valued? Are outside speakers brought into the community?
9. Is there a variety of activities available which promote acceptance of cultural diversity?
10. If I am of the majority culture, are there activities that I can attend that will provide new, culturally enlightening experiences?
11. Are there restaurants which provide a variety of ethnic food selection choices?

12. Is intellectual development provided as part of this job, or am I responsible for this development? Is it financially prohibitive?
13. Is there time allotted on a daily or weekly basis for intellectual development?
14. Does this agency or business allow a sabbatical or professional leave of absence?
15. Is there support for professional presentations and publications? Can I get time off to do this?
16. Are there challenging schools in the community? Will these schools provide intellectually stimulating and competitive instruction to my children?
17. Will my spouse or significant other find this location intellectually stimulating?

EMOTIONAL DIMENSION

This dimension measures the degree to which one has an awareness and acceptance of one's feelings. This includes the degree to which one feels positive and enthusiastic about oneself and life. It measures the capacity to appropriately control one's feelings and related behavior, including the realistic assessment of one's limitations.

1. Will I be alone in this community? Do I want to be?
2. Are there prospective friends or mates to meet my emotional needs?
3. Are there mental health professionals or agencies to assist me in case of emotional problems?
4. Do I have family and/or personal problems that limit my ability to accept a job which is geographically removed?
5. Is my choice of entertainment available?
6. Do I have problems or diseases which need on-going care? Is my employer understanding of these situations?
7. Is my sexual orientation respected? Are there personal outlets for me in this location?

8. Is this job overly stressful in terms of deadlines, competition etc? Are there outlets for this such as physical recreation, counseling, or employee assistance programs?
9. Does competition limit friendships in this occupation?
10. Does my spouse, significant other, and/or children find this location emotionally satisfying?
11. Is there a future for me here, or is job security questionable?
12. Will I be able to enjoy this location or is this job only going to be selected as a temporary location? Will I be wishing my life away?
13. Is the crime rate a matter for concern? Will I be cautious all of the time?
14. Will I be able to control my work load or schedule?
15. Is it possible to separate my job expectations and my personal life?
16. Will this job allow me to start "fresh" or are there many similarities to jobs that I have held in the past?
17. Will I experience ageism, sexism, racism, or homophobia in this location?
18. Do my colleagues appreciate a sense of humor, or does the job require a serious approach to daily life?
19. Will I be able to maintain a long-distance relationship while working in this location? Will my significant other(s) want to relocate?
20. Am I in a situation in which my children have to maintain visitation rights with their other parent? Are travel arrangements manageable?

Conclusion

The inventory presented serves as an instrument of focus in terms of career decision making. It is important for the professional and student to recognize that lifestyles are unique and personal. There is no single model for wellness which will identify the needs and values of all individuals. Daily habits, behaviors, attitudes and choices serve to either enhance or deplete an

individual's long-term health. It is never too early to start making decisions which will be beneficial to one's physical and mental health. Career decisions can influence every other aspect of one's life, and are thus vitally important to the wellness concept. To quote Hettler (1980), "It seems ludicrous to prepare a student for a lifetime career in their area of interest and not prepare them for the responsibilities of maintaining their life" (p.17).

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